could not prevent individuals from becoming needy through misfortune 421
or laziness and their trying to rent a part of their property for an annual 425
payment or for a sum needed once. This is called ban die pan, literally: begging to buy. The sense of relinquishing by lending /133/ is contained in this. For example, a field is worth 300 reichsmarks. Fifty or 100 reichsmarks are accepted for it and the creditor remains the owner of the field until the money is repaid. This type of purchase occurs frequently. There are frequently traders (sanghsai) who try to use such purchases to their own advantage. They turn over the field to the debtor for further cultivation in return for payment in produce of 50 to 70 per cent of the harvest. After several years the whole field is their property. Aside from this method, it also happens that instead of being able to repay the money the people need still further sums. In that case then the entire price of 300 reichsmarks is paid and the actual purchase is considered completed; that is called ban die lot, literally: totally, completely sold. A family-clan which gradually loses its property in this manner descends into poverty and need. There is nothing else for it to do than to look for work elsewhere, to rent land or to sell the children as a kind of slaves to better situated people. If 40 reichsmarks are paid for a child of about 10 years, he remains in the bondage of the buyer until the money can be repaid. That happens only rarely. Besides food and the most necessary clothing only one rupee is deducted annually as wage from the purchase price thus, practically, the child belongs to the buyer for the duration of his life. [567]

It is the duty of individual members of a family clan to work together so that the clan property will be maintained and will produce 413
the necessary amount for the maintenance of all. The clan mother 421
must oversee primarily that the appropriate customs and usages are preserved. She is held in high esteem by all. To do something against her wish to offend her, to call her insulting names, or to go so far as to strike her is considered sang (taboo), a severe crime that causes misfortune. It is a great sin (peq) and a thoroughly great disgrace (ngowih eh tam) for the whole clan.(7) As long as a member 413
488
762.

7. Also considered similar crimes are selling clan property in secret, incest, desecrating burial places in a coarse manner, making use of holy grounds or wood.

/134/ of the family has committed such a crime and has not begged pardon from the clan mother and the elders of the clan, perhaps with the words: pardon me, I have committed an error (ne mup le nga leh

16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1964
AR7 Khasi AR7
[P. 110B]

another. In other words, a state is not a fixed territorial entity. In the early twentieth century, the most populous of the 25 chiefdoms, Khyrim, contained 30,833 persons occupying 7,850 houses in 372 villages, and the least populous, Nongkrem, contained 248 persons occupying 53 houses in 3 villages. Five of the chiefdoms were headed by a *syiem* (chief), three by a *lyngdoh* (priest), six by a *sirdar*, and one by a *wahadadar*. These leaders all had executive and judicial functions, but a chief's authority was limited in that he had to obtain the approval of his executive council before acting. The other leaders were subject to a similar limitation. A chief maintained a small police force. His major sources of revenue were market tolls, fines, and, more recently, income from licenses to distill raw whisky. Succession to a ruling role in the larger states traditionally involved election by members of a lineage that had a hereditary right to elect, from among members of a lineage that had the hereditary right to rule. In British times, the elective basis was broadened, differentially in the various states, even to the point of popular elections. (Cf. Arbuthnot 1881, Lyngdoh 1892.)

Social stratification. The three classes of lineage are the nobles, the commoners, and the slaves or servants. This stratification applies only to the recruitment to office in the native-state system, for there is no hypergamy, and in a village assembly everyone has equal voice. The noble lineages have the hereditary right to fill from among their male members roles such as village or state priest, councillor to a chief, or electors of a chief. The free lineages which today are recruitment as slave or servant lineages had the inherited obligation to render special services to a chief's household. There is no Khasi term for "commoner." Every lineage other than a noble or a slave lineage is a commoner lineage, and the commoner lineages are in the majority. Warfare. Warfare was engrossed by the British, and little is known for certain about its traditional forms. The tactics which confronted the British were the ambush and the guerrilla raid. Traditional goals included taking heads from other Khasis and capturing women from the valleys.

RELIGION. Major and indigenous religions. A Welsh Calvinistic Methodist missionary penetrated into Cherrapunji in 1832, and the work that he began continues to this day. His society, which has since become the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission, introduced writing, village primary schools, a high school, a theological seminary, and a hospital. Competing missionaries followed, and by 1914 some thirty-odd Khasis were quarreling over the tenets not only of traditional Hinduism and Islam but also of the Buddhism, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Unitarianism (Roy 1914). By the 1950s, missionaries of the Church of God and the Seventh Day Adventists were